

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

1

**Unit One – Launching the Writing Workshop**

*September/October*

Overview

The most important thing we can say about September in the kindergarten writing workshop is this: don't wait! It is tempting to think that children need to know the alphabet before launching a RWP writing workshop—but this simply is not so. Some people go so far as to suggest that youngsters need to be brought into the routines of school before a teacher can launch a writing workshop, again, this is not the case. Writing workshop is an absolutely perfect structure for engaging kindergartners at the very start of the year. Please take the brave step of gathering children on the first day of school and inviting them to live like writers.

You are probably asking, "How does the child get any actual writing down if he or she can't yet write?" First, accept the fact that, in part, you are inviting children to role play. Youngsters have no problem pretending to be queens and kings. They have no problem acting as train conductors or mothers and fathers. So at the start of the unit, you should not have any qualms over the fact that your kids don't actually know how to spell. You are inviting them to write "as best they can," using really cool paper and fun pens. Some (even many) children will draw and label rather than write sentences. On the other hand, you need to keep in mind that according to recent research, two-thirds of kindergarten children come to school knowing the alphabet, so depending on the context in which you teach, you may well have many children who are already able to spell so others can decipher their meaning. No matter where your students are, do not worry! This unit will help kids build the foundational skills that will help move them to master the end of the year standard of drawing and writing different types of books. And writing workshop will always be better if it is surrounded by rich oral storytelling, the reading aloud of gorgeous picture books, shared and interactive writing, word play, and many opportunities for talk.

This unit of study is closely aligned with the forthcoming revision of *Launching the Writing Workshop* (Heinemann, 2013) from the series, *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum*. The revised book, and this write-up, reflect the Project's latest thinking about kindergarten writing, and have also been designed to address the new rigorous standards laid out by the Common Core, as well as Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge levels.

One of the big changes you will see in this write-up is that we now suggest launching Kindergarten Writing with a combined genre unit. Whereas in past years, we have suggested beginning with just narrative writing, this year we recommend that you start the unit off writing 'teaching books' or informational writing and the last part of the unit you switch to personal narrative. This will then work on two standards in the Common Core, W K.2 and W K.3. You will also be able to highlight how students are learning the differences between genres, authors and illustrators as in RL K.5 and RL K.6.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

2

Assessment

The biggest expectation you will have for your youngest writers in this first writing unit is that they begin to express themselves in a variety of ways: through pictures and drawing, through teacher/student talk, and through whole class, partnership, and small group conversation. Your students will come to you with a range of writing abilities, some already knowing how to write their name and perhaps a few simple words, and others who have never seen letters. Your challenge is finding ways to work with each child at his or her level, while also bearing in mind the grade-specific benchmarks that the nation now expects all children reach by the year's end.

As you consider how to assess your kindergarten writers across the year, you have some choices to make. You may want to maximize your assessment of growth across all three writing genres, from the very start of the year to the very end, in which case we at the RWP suggest giving students initial writing assessments in narrative, informational and opinion writing, and then summative assessments in all three again at the end of the year. If this feels like too much to tackle along with everything else you are doing to launch the year, you may instead opt to give initial assessments in just the two genres your children will write in this unit—informational and narrative. That is, you could wait until November to assess persuasive writing. Another option is to assess just for informational writing, since the unit begins with teaching texts, and to then reassess for informational writing at the end of the second bend, give students a narrative assessment at the start of bend three, and perhaps end the year by assessing both kinds of writing. The choice is yours to make and each option has its benefits.

No matter what course of action you take, as you plan your assessments, you will want to bear in mind the guidelines laid out by the Common Core Standards for both writing and speaking and listening. Based on over thirty years of studying how children at this age progress in writing, we suggest that in thinking about the standards, you can expect entering kindergartners to “use a combination of drawing, dictation, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events” (W K.3) and to “compose informative/explanatory texts” (W K.2). By the year's end, your young writers should be able to not only narrate events, but also “tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened” (W K.3). They should be able not only to compose informative/explanatory texts, but to compose ones in which they “name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic” (W K.2). This unit will set them up to work toward these goals and will provide many opportunities for repeated practice.

On the first day of this unit, you will want to see what your kids already know how to do, so that you see where to begin your teaching. Perhaps the first assessment you administer will be the Letter ID Assessment. This will provide valuable information about which kids know their letters and sounds, and which do not. If most of your children arrive knowing many letters and sounds, then you will want to administer the Spelling Inventory; if most do not know their letters and sounds, the Spelling Inventory is not necessary. Refer to the Spelling and Print Concepts section at the end of the unit for specific information about assessments and instruction in these areas.

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**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

3

Next, you will give your children a three-page booklet and ask them to write a story (and/or a teaching text and/or an opinion piece) about something they have done (story), or know about (informational), or want to argue for (opinion). Collect these pieces in order to see what they produce, and then use either the RWP's *Narrative Writing Continuum*, the *Informational Writing Continuum*, or the *Opinion Writing Continuum* to determine a starting level for each child. This will help you determine what to teach in terms of structure, elaboration, craft, cohesion, and meaning. This assessment will also help determine the types of paper you start off with to support your students' writing. You will later want to compare what your kids produce for this initial assessment with what they are able to do at the end of the unit and throughout the year using formative assessments. This will give you a sense of how each child learns, of how he or she moves across a variety of skill sets, acquiring increased proficiency in writing, speaking and listening. It will also influence your teaching moves across the year. Within the unit, you may rely on your formative assessments, such as your conferences and small group work. Use this time to assess that students are on track and to teach into the things they are not yet grasping in order to support their progress.

The Reading and Writing Project has also developed a *Writing Process Continuum* which will aid in assessing children's understanding and usage of the different stages of the writing process. In September of kindergarten, you will expect that your students can generate ideas by recalling a topic or event and drawing pictures to show that event. When they are drafting, children will be able to write one to two pages of work each day, completing a new piece in ten minutes. With prompting and support, your young writers should be able to tell more about their story or teaching text, adding on to the pictures and perhaps labels with some letters. The *Writing Process Continuum* is a road map letting you know where your children are headed.

**Bend One – Writers Write to Teach People the Things They Know and Care About**

The first day of Writing Workshop is a reason to celebrate, especially for kindergartners, many of whom will be writing for the very first time. It is important that kindergartners feel how special this day is. Gather your little ones around you and lean in close. Point out all the books that surround your meeting area. Tell children that every one of those books has been written by an author—and that they, too, will be authors this year, starting today. Then demonstrate that authors sometimes write books about things they have done and other times they write books about things they know and care about. Then move into talking about the latter kind of writing, "teaching books."

It is hard to overemphasize the importance of establishing clear structures and routines so children can carry on with independence during writing time. Some teachers of kindergarten struggle with this concept, thinking, "These kids can't even put on their coats without a hand." But young kids can do a lot with independence. When most kids are working with blocks or crayons, they don't need to stop every three minutes to ask, "Now what?" or "Is this right?" They tend to work with engagement, confidence and zeal.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

4

For now, at the start of the year, the writing workshop should feel like block time, with kids having and pursuing their own wonderful ideas. This means you need to accept children's approximations with pleasure, postponing the nudging you'll do in time. Imagine kids starting, working on, completing their "writing" as best they are able, moving from one "teaching book" to another with verve and confidence, even though it is unlikely that the work they produce at this stage will dazzle you. Chances are that many children's "teaching books" will consist of an underdeveloped scrawl and little more—for now. And, that's okay—for now. Of course, your children will not all be the same at the start of the year, so expect that some will draw representative pictures from the start, and some will write with letters and even words, from the start. But many of them may do little more than make a scribble-like shape on the page. Soon, you'll intervene in ways that raise the level of that work, but at the start of the year your goal is first to make sure that every child can keep himself, herself, engaged throughout the RWP writing workshop, working hard and in a way that the child, anyhow, believes is profound.

In order for children to carry on with independence, you'll want to think about the routines that you need to explicitly teach. You may find yourself doing a bit of observing to see whether the kids need instruction in these routines or whether they naturally seem to handle these things. But certainly, in many classrooms, teachers find it helps to teach children to move to and from the meeting area quickly, directly, sitting on their bottoms, hands to themselves, on assigned rug spots. Most teachers teach children what is expected when you say, in the middle of a minilesson, "Turn and talk" and then, a minute or two later, "Eyes back here." You'll probably want to appoint some children to distribute baskets of supplies before the minilesson. You'll probably also want to teach children to put their names ("That's the first word we always write on our paper!") and the date on their writing (date stamps are helpful), and so forth.

The writing your children do at first will probably all be on one page, even though before long your kindergartners will be writing in booklets. Don't race ahead to the booklet phase because by doing so, you deny your kids the fun of progressing from single pages of writing to booklets, and that is one of the great highs of the first unit of study. You will see that we turn to this in Bend Two, with a bit of a flourish. For the first two bends in the road of this unit, some children may write two, three or even four pieces of writing in one day's writing workshop. Expect that a lot of children will breeze through multiple pieces of writing, and teach them where to put finished work, how to put their writing in their folders (perhaps you'll use the system suggested in the RWP Primary Units of Study series where you store finished pieces on the red dot side of the pocket folder, ongoing pieces on the green dot side), how to choose new paper for themselves, and how to get started on a new piece of "writing."

During the first weeks of school you'll probably give students sheets of blank white paper, perhaps with a line for the child's name. If you see that some of your children are already writing sentences, then you will want to give them paper that has a few lines. Children then either just draw, or they draw and label, or they just write, or any combination thereof. It does not really matter what kind of paper you use at the start of the unit—the important thing is that you invite

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**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

5

everyone to draw stuff that they know about and can teach others, and then circle among kids and get them to point to something in the drawing—perhaps the child himself, herself, in addition to the bike, the sun, the window—and to label those parts of the piece.

Some of your earliest work will be around teaching children to hear sounds and letters. Chances are many of your children won't yet have many—or even any—sound/letter knowledge. Although you will devote a good portion of your time to this teaching during phonics and word study, you will want to also support it during writing workshop. Invite a writer to say whatever he has drawn slowly—"Say 'me' *slowly*...what sound do you hear first? Say it again..." and then, when a child has isolated a sound, ideally the first sound, you can say, "Write that! /hmmm/ Write that." Act as if the child can definitely do this—this will allow you to see what a child can do. And of course, every child CAN write /hmmm/...even if some write a lollipop or a squiggle. The writing the child produces in that instance will give you an instant way to assess her letter name and sound identification knowledge.

Of course, this is not only the beginning work of writing; it is also the beginning work of reading. The Foundational Standards of the Common Core outline four major categories: print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. During this first unit of study, you will introduce students to all four categories. Specifically, in this RWP unit, you will teach students to label the objects in their pictures, thus addressing RF K.1b-d and laying the groundwork for children to understand "the organization and basic features of print." You will also set children up to listen for and hear the sounds in the words they write, which addresses RF K.2b-d. This work helps children begin not only to relate letters with sounds, but also to learn how to spell words.

Once you know what each child can do, you will direct different kids to different sorts of paper. Children who know a handful of letters and letter names (if not also sounds) can write with initial and final consonants, because usually the letter's name contains the sound the letter makes (as is the case for *m*). This means that right away, a bunch of your children will be labeling their pictures. Children who can label using starting and ending sounds will be very successful writing sentences to accompany their drawings, and should therefore be channeled to use paper with lines for those sentences as well as a large space for drawing.

One of the longstanding foundational lessons that is featured both in the original RWP's *Launching the Writing Workshop* and its forthcoming revised version, is one that teaches students the saying, "When you're done, you've just begun." Many children will tend to zip through one piece of writing after another, and so it will be important that you teach them to slow down, take stock and revise before moving on. Teach them to self-assess, thinking, "Have I done everything I can do in this one piece? Are there enough pictures? Enough words? Have I told everything I know and can share about this topic?" before they declare that the piece is done. It is never too early for children to get into the habit of assessing their own writing and making choices, and of course, one of the big goals of any unit is to engage in meaningful, strategic

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**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

6

revision. The easiest kind of revision revolves around adding on. A writer can revise by adding more details to a picture, by filling in parts that are missing. That will probably be the first kind of revision that your writers do.

Another big lesson you'll want to convey to your little ones right away is that they can be their own problem solvers. You might teach a minilesson in which you pretend to be a needy writer and ask kids in the room to help you. Pretend that you finished working on your piece and don't know what to do next. Then you might switch out of your role-play and say, "Is that what I do, writers, when I am not sure what to do?" Then answer your own question by saying, loud and clear, "No way! Writers solve their own problems. Writers think, 'I can solve this myself.'" Writers should be able to keep themselves going when they run out of paper or out of ink. Likewise, when a writer finishes one piece of writing, instead of waiting for the teacher, the writer should be able to start another piece of writing. At the start of the year, many kindergartners across RWP classrooms start and complete a piece of writing every ten minutes, and so it will be crucial for them to know how to put the finished writing into a special place (eventually it will be in their own writing folders) and then to secure a new piece of paper and to start on a new piece of writing.

Of course, you'll support self-reliance not only through the minilesson but throughout the workshop. Every time that children act with self-reliance, celebrate this: "Writers, will you look here for a minute? I want to tell you about the smart work Pedro did. Pedro finished his writing. But do you think he just sat there and said, 'Oh, no, what will I do now? Oh no, oh no....' No way! Pedro solved his own problem. And you know what he did?..."

One reason it is critical that children are able to carry on with independence, writing or pretending to write as best they can, is that it allows you to move among them, teaching into their work. You are only free to teach if kids are not relying on you for every little thing. This means that your first goal—helping writers work with confidence and independence, at whatever level of work they can pull off—actually enables the next goal, which is for you to teach in ways that dramatically lift the level of what kids can do. A second, equally important reason to support independence in this way is that it sets children up, right from the start, to know that they can take charge of their decisions and their work as writers. The earlier you convey this message to children, the sooner they will take ownership of their lives as writers and as learners.

In order to teach in ways that will allow all children to be successful and that also help engage them in some of the fundamentals of writing, you may decide to teach youngsters how to make representational pictures about the information that they are teaching. This is the beginning work of the informational writing standard, W K.2. Imagine a minilesson in which you tell children that when you write, you picture what you want to teach in your mind, and then put that picture onto the page in drawings and in words. You could then demonstrate how when you go to draw your dog (for example), you think about your dog and you see him in your mind. You picture his head, and so you draw a circle on the paper. Then you think, "Does he have more than a head?"

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**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

7

and, after checking your mental image, you add a bigger circle (a body) and four lines underneath (the legs) onto the page. You may wonder why it is important to teach children to draw representational pictures. One big reason is that the process of doing this is very similar to that which a writer follows in order to write. You are engaging kindergartners in the central act of deciding upon a meaning, then using all they know in order to capture that meaning onto the page, then revising what is on the page to make it truer, more complete. Then, too, by teaching children how to draw representational pictures, you equip them with some symbols and a concrete way to capture even things that are hard to draw.

Teaching children to draw representational pictures may look, at first, like Level 1 DOK work, and it is, in that children are recalling what something looks like, literally, then recording that on the page. But this sort of envisioning also sets children up to think strategically about how to represent their ideas—that is, to do work of higher complexity. What one child imagines when deciding to draw a book about soccer may look entirely different from what another child imagines when writing a book on the same topic. Both children may make circles for a soccer ball, but perhaps one shows herself behind the ball, ready to make a goal, while the other focuses more on the field of players, or the audience watching. Representing ideas is as much about perspective as it is about drawing.

Although you will teach children to draw, this does not mean that you will not also teach them to write. Once they have grasped the fact that they can use pictures to tell a story, you might want to say, “Today I want to teach you that writers use both pictures and words when we write. Some writers write words and labels beside the picture, and some write sentences at the bottom of the page. But every writer writes with pictures *and* words.” You won’t want to waste any time before you teach children the phonetic principle so that they are able to add these words. That is, you will want to teach each child to say a word slowly, hearing the constituent sounds, and to represent each sound with a mark on the page. Remember that two-thirds of kindergartners come to school knowing their letters, and a third know many of their letter-sound matches. If this is not the case for many of your children, then you will want to do lots of interactive writing and shared reading to reinforce their concepts about print. This is easy, fun work and the payoff is huge.

**Bend Two – Writers Write More: Turning Teaching Pieces into Teaching Books**

In Bend Two you will aim to lift the level of what your children did during the first week or so of school. You will nudge kids who made squiggles to make letters, nudge kids who made letters to make words, and help kids who wrote single words to write two-word labels, or even simple sentences. This bend is all about adding on, writing more, revising to make writing even fuller. To that end you will announce with some fanfare that the class is now ready to turn teaching pieces into teaching books. You may want to bring out a few mentor texts, showing how published authors write pieces that go across more than just one page.

Shining a light on proficient (or published) writers during the RWP workshop conveys to your little ones that they, too, can try out some of the things that grownup writers do. In part, you will

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

8

be teaching youngsters the whole enterprise of schooling. You'll be showing them that at school, a teacher figures out something that the kids can't quite do but could learn to do, then the teacher teaches that thing, and the kids try it, and —presto!—they can do this new thing.

Whereas in Bend I, your students revised by adding on to a single page, now revision will take on new meaning. If a child needs to say more, you could ask, "What else do you want to teach?" and the writer's answer can become the content for page two in a booklet. Teach children that if they have more to say, if they want to teach something else about their pet or hockey club or dance class, they can get another sheet of paper and staple it behind the first—or tape it below the first—in a fashion which allows their writing to literally grow. Some teachers give children pre-stapled booklets to avoid little fingers getting hurt and to save time, but there's real value to letting kids create their own books. Not only will they have fun putting the pages together, but the act of creating a booklet carries an important message: just as their writing is growing, so are the writers behind them. Make it into a big deal that your children are "graduating" from writing a one-page story, to stapling a second page onto the first, so as to make a booklet. "Oh my goodness!" you might say, "I can't believe you are writing a whole book! I can't wait to read it."

With the routines of the RWP writing workshop and the writing process, too, now familiar to children, you will want to push them toward more strategic work. You might teach, for example, that writers make plans for how their books will go. They can think in advance of writing, "What do I want to teach and how might that go?" and then they tell their ideas across their pages before writing. In effect, you will be teaching that writers think through a project even before they begin it—that writing involves planning. You can give each child a "planning" booklet and ask partners to tell each other their books across the pages, tapping each one, before they go off to actually "write." Kids can even decide how many pages they might need, and create a three- or four- or five- page booklet. You will want to note here that to move kids towards writing in a booklet, you are moving them to not only teach more and say more in their informational pieces, but you are helping them learn the baby steps towards categorization. In Standard W.K.2 you are teaching students how to name a topic and tell some information about that topic. Writing in a booklet can help and prompt kids to, not only think about more information, but to organize it.

You will continue to scaffold children's work, of course, but you will also want to push them to be self-reliant; conversations with peers can function largely independently of you. For example, you might set children up to work in partners to consider what is and isn't yet working in their books. Together, they can talk back to their books, asking clarifying questions, like "How?" and "Why" to be sure that the information in each one's book makes sense and says enough to teach. The Common Core emphasizes this sort of collaborative conversation and questioning in its first three speaking and listening standards for kindergartners, and we believe it is an essential process for our youngest writers to grow as writers and as thinkers. You will want to work on supporting your young talkers on truly listening to one another in order to carry on a conversation with multiple exchanges. You will also note that in the reading standards for

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**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

9

informative texts, RI K.1 expects students to ask and answer questions about key details in the text. In this part of the unit, you help kids 'encode' with that skill. This will help them to add more information (W K.2), clarify information and write with more power and precision.

As children work in their grownup books, you could teach them that writers who are nearing the end of a project again ask questions of themselves (and of one another), ones like "How do I know this is done?" Then they think about what else they might add and check to see what information they may have missed. That is, you will support the notion that children have decisions to make, that they talk back to their work, posing questions of themselves, and that one way of taking ownership of a writing project is by deciding what makes it truly done. Not only will you be introducing children to the notion that writers revise pre-publication, you will also convey to your students that they are in charge of their own writing projects and processes.

Meanwhile, you will want to continue to help children build the skills they will need to actually produce marks on the page. Many children will need additional support hearing the sounds in the words they are trying to write. It is important that by October, all your kindergartners grasp the principle that each sound (or phoneme) needs to be represented with at least one letter (or letter-like mark) on the page. This is foundational, and even children who do not yet have a strong knowledge of letter-sound correspondence can learn this principle. You will also see that in short order, with strong instruction, more and more of your children will move from using letter-like marks to using letters. Once you have begun some work with phonics and taught or reminded children of letter names, you will see them using their beginning knowledge of letters and sounds as they write. When a child writes the word 'coat,' he might record a 'c' or a 'k' for the initial sound, and if the child hears an ending sound, he might use either a 't' or a 'd' to capture it...these sorts of spelling are expected for kindergartners. On The Reading and Writing Project website you'll see samples of work from kindergarten classrooms, which demonstrates the expected range of work that you will likely see at the start of the year. The important thing is that you expect children's spelling to change very visibly and quickly and to do so right away. Certainly you should expect children's drawings to become representational so that by October, a house will have some semblance of a house, and at the same time, children should begin to label half a dozen objects on each page with letter-like shapes (if not letters) that go left to right. Within the first month of school, you will not usually see conventional spelling, but you will see many writers using a bunch of consonant letters to represent first or dominant sounds in words.

To get this happening, you will need to teach like crazy. This is not a laissez-faire thing that happens while you monitor kids' behavior. If a child draws a bike, when you pull close to that child, listen to what he wants to write. When he says, "This is my bike," point to the part of the drawing that resembles a bike and say, "Let's write 'bike.'" If the child protests that he does not know how, tell him, "I'll show you how. First, say 'bike' slowly. Do that." Let him do it on his own. If you sense he needs support, join him, speaking in a quieter voice than his. Then say, "Let's think about what sounds we hear in b . . . I . . . k . . .," and say it again, more slowly. "Say it with me," you'll say, so the child joins you in stretching it out. Listen to the sounds as he

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

10

articulates the word. Ask, "What do you hear?" It is unlikely the child will say, "I hear a 'b.'" If he says, "I hear /b/", then say, "Write that down" and look intently at the paper, as if you have not a single doubt that he can supply the letter.

If the child records anything, even if the mark is a wiggle and not a letter, then read it back, /b/, joining the child in reading the /b/, and then making the long /i/ sound. Again, nudge him to record a mark representing that next sound. If, on the other hand, he did not isolate and hear a /b/ sound, you'll want to demonstrate how you say the word slowly and listen to a sound, producing your own /b/. You can also tell the child that the letter 'b' makes a /b/ sound, but the most important lessons for the beginner revolve around phonemic awareness—words can be said slowly, constituent sounds can be isolated and heard and then recorded. At the start of kindergarten, many children will need your help saying words slowly, isolating the first sound, and making a mark on the page to represent that sound. If the child has not isolated the first sound, you probably won't progress to help him isolate and make marks representing later sounds. Instead you might move to asking him to help you label other items—the sun, the child himself. In each instance, help the child say the name of the item slowly, listening for the first sound, and then making a mark to represent that sound. For now, the important concept is that each sound gets represented by a mark on the page. Again, at this early stage, it is not essential that the mark be a letter, let alone that it be the correct letter!

To support labeling, you might use interactive writing to stretch words together, allowing the children to practice saying words slowly, listening for each sound to then write the words that match the pictures. Interactive writing is a great way to slow down this process so that together you can struggle to do what at the forefront is very challenging work for emergent writers. Once children hear the first sound in a word, they might then need to search for a letter or be taught how to use their alphabet chart to help them find the letter that makes the sound they heard and felt. You might label one page of your writing one day, and then 6 labels on another page of your story on another day. Even though you will specifically call on certain kids to share the pen, based on their approximations in their independent writing, you will want to make sure that everyone is somehow involved in the stretching and writing, even if the writing for all of the non-pen holders is done mostly in the air. While word writing and representational drawing might be the main skills you are supporting during interactive writing, don't forget to point out the other writing process work you are doing, such as rereading pictures and labels to remember your story, or rereading inside of a word to figure out what is already on the page, what you should listen for and what you should write next. Interactive writing is also a nice place to tuck in some of the other work that the Common Core State Standards call for around the conventions of Standard English, such as the use of uppercase and lowercase letters, and the ability to "produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities."

Of course, labeling is only part of writing. Even children who are just making scribbles on one sheet of paper and declaring that a finished piece can learn revision. Show these writers that they can look back and think, "What else can I say?" and then add more onto the page. That's

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

11

revision! Of course, for these kids, this will be adding details to the drawings—sea gulls over the beach and shells dotting the shore. For kindergartners, revision first involves adding details into drawings, or drawing a second picture to depict the next event, only later does it involve adding more words.

If your kindergartners do not yet have the skills to sustain work for very long, then for now, stop the RWP workshop after half an hour and use the time you save by having an abbreviated writing workshop to engage your students in ten minute bursts of interactive writing. Do this once or twice a day, usually far away from the writing workshop. During interactive writing, the work you do together can mirror the work children are trying to do independently. You could also use interactive writing to demonstrate one part or several parts of what it takes to write a story. For example, if you notice that your writers need work with representational drawings, then together you might share the pen to draw images on the page that do the work of telling, and helping writers to remember, their stories.

As you near the end of this bend, you will want to celebrate the work children have done so far. You might suggest that they fancy up a book or two to share with the class. You'll want your kindergartners to feel the significance of this moment, and that they are about to turn a bend. The Speaking and Listening portion of the Common Core asks that kindergarten children work on the presentation of their knowledge and ideas. Luckily, in this unit of study, students will have the opportunity to work on these presentation skills, twice. Students will be able to practice and receive feedback on how they express their thoughts and ideas and clearly as well as work on describing things and events.

**Bend Three – Writing Stories**

For the second portion of this unit, your young writers will shift from making teaching texts to telling stories. Introduce this new kind of writing with some ceremony, reminding children that many of the books that surround them in the classroom are stories. You won't need to spend much time teaching kindergartners strategies for coming up with ideas. Most will be bursting with stories to tell. Simply teach that writers who want to tell stories think of something that they've done, take a piece of paper, and put what they remember they did first on the page. You might demonstrate with a story of your own, making a quick sketch of, say, how you had to pump up the tires on your new bike. Then, put what happened next. Perhaps a quick sketch on the page of you riding the bike.

Much of what you teach during this bend will be similar to what you taught children to do during the first two bends. The only difference is that now children will be writing stories, not teaching texts (W K.3). This means that your young writers will learn the important fact that writers create different kinds of writing, and will simultaneously benefit from repeated practice doing similar work. They can use both pictures and "words" to write, can check to be sure they've gotten everything onto the page that they wanted to say, and can ask each other questions to clarify. In the last two parts of this unit you will be teaching students how to draw and write about a single

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**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

12

event and to try and tell that story with as much detail and information as possible. Certainly you will be encouraging kids to show their own reactions and feelings in the moment. For some of your students, writing a sequence of events- in the order that they happened will not be difficult to do. Others may need quite a bit of practice, demonstration and feedback. All of this work is what standard W.K.3 calls for students to learn how to do in Kindergarten. Of course, you may have some students already capable of telling stories in these ways. You will surely want to use RWP's *Narrative Writing Continuum* to help identify new territory to investigate with your students.

As you begin this bend, you might first teach that after drawing and writing one page about what the child did, the child can "read" the page and think, "What did I do next?" and then add another page or two onto the first to tell the rest of the story. Alternatively, the child can "read" the first page to a friend, then tell the friend more stuff—and then add that stuff on. When a child reads his or her story and then has a lot more to say, you will respond, "You should add that to your writing!" Expect a flurry of stapling. Very soon, though, you will want to teach children that just as writers plan teaching texts, they also plan stories. Kids can use planning booklets to think about how their stories will go. Teach them that the first thing that happened to them goes on the first page, the next thing on the next page, and so on.

You may find that many of your students need more practice with storytelling. It is an important step forward to teach writers that they can actually approach a page, already planning to write a whole story. Even though children did this with teaching texts, it will take time before this becomes second nature, as this work involves understanding that narratives are told sequentially. Essentially, you will teach kids to take a blank booklet and to narrate the story as they touch one page, then another, then another, telling a cohesive, linear narrative.

You'll also want to teach kids to read over their stories, just as they read over their teaching texts. This will include storytelling the pictures and then pointing to and reading the labels (or the approximate labels). Tell children that when writers finish one story, after we read what we have written, we then see what else we can add (this will mean not only adding to the pictures but also adding more labels). Of course, when we're finished, we get new paper and start the next story.

Of course, children will not only need to "read" their stories to themselves but also to others. While your students will have been holding partnership conversations since early on, we at the RWP imagine that recently (perhaps in the last bend) you will have established more deliberate writing partners. Now you will teach your writers how to work in these partnerships in order to have an effective routine across the year. Take the time to teach partners to put their pieces between the two of them and to take turns listening and sharing. This might sound funny, given that some of them won't have many letters on the page, but you can teach them that a writer can take his or her pencil, touch the different things on the page, and say the text or story that accompanies that representation. It is important for young writers to reread their stories so

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**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

13

that their writing stays fresh in their minds. This partner work helps to reinforce not only the content of the story, and to infuse a sense of audience, but it helps with early reading behaviors and concepts of print: how to hold a book, turn pages, point to and name things on a page and work with a partner. These are the same kinds of things that students are working on in reading. For example, you might touch the picture of yourself and say, "I blew out my candles (touch the candles). I cut the cake (touch the cake). I took a bite (touch the cake on the fork)." Notice that you have not read your story like this: "candles, cake, eat." You read it like a story. This will support teaching your students about sequencing actions in Standard W.K.3.

As you near the end of this bend, you may want to teach children ways to bring their writing to life. You could incorporate a little acting here, teaching kids to pretend they are the people in their stories and to imagine what the people say. We don't imagine your kindergartners will write actual lines of dialogue with tag lines, but they can certainly draw speech bubbles as reminders of who speaks when for when they storytell, and some may even have the skills by now to write short bits of talking. This will support teaching your students about how to show their own and others' reactions in in their stories which is also stated in standard W K.3.

Remind children to draw on everything they have learned about writing stories as they revise their stories and let them know that soon they will be picking their favorite work to share at an end-of-the-unit celebration.

**Bend Four – Writers Celebrate: Fixing and Fancying Up Writing**

At the end of the month, you will probably ask children to choose their best piece and to revise it yet again, making it even better in preparation for what will be your children's very first Author Celebration.

In this first unit, children may revise by adding more details to their drawings and more labels to their pages, or by thinking about what readers will want to know and adding that information to the story. They may also consider whether they used the most important words, and check to see whether their words "look right." As reflected in the writing portion of the Common Core Standards, (W K.5), editing and revising with support from adults is a critical skill that we want to teach. It is important to give students feedback that meets them where they are and helps them move forward. They will most certainly not correct and recopy their publishable work. Students will though, to the best of their abilities, work towards fixing up their spelling and word choice and possibly even sentence structure.

In *Launching the Writing Workshop*, you'll see that children are invited to "fix up" and "fancy up" their writing to prepare it for the Author Celebration. If your children are fancying up one of their pieces of writing, this probably means adding fancy borders or stickers around the margins. You might also show your young writers that they can make a cover so their pieces look like real books.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project**  
**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

14

For the publishing celebration, you needn't do anything too elaborate in order to please your students. Some teachers suggest kindergartners bring a stuffed animal to school and then "read" the story to the stuffed animal. These creatures can become a listening zoo and work as alternatives to partners on any day. Some teachers suggest children roll their pieces up and slide them into paper-towel rolls that have been decorated into "piece pipes" and then march around the room singing a song—"We are the authors, the authors, the authors, we are the authors that are coming to publish our pieces." The parade can end at the bulletin board and each child can then tack his or her piece into the appropriate square. That is—publishing shouldn't require a huge amount of fuss! Of course, in the best possible world, the way to publish the writing would be to help children see their "writing" doing some real work in the world. In this way, this RWP unit could come full circle.

Spelling and Print Concepts

As mentioned in the assessment section, you'll want to familiarize yourself with what your students know about spelling and concepts of writing, including their understanding of basic print concepts (i.e., directionality, print vs. picture), alphabet knowledge, letter-sound correspondence, phonological and phonemic awareness, the words they know how to spell with automaticity, and what they know about problem-solving words. While we at the RWP have described strategies and expectations around spelling and concepts of writing in each bend, it will be important to determine what the majority of your students are ready to learn in order to decide what of these foundational skills to teach in whole-class lessons and what to teach in small groups and conferences. By analyzing student writing, giving the Letter ID Assessment, and possibly administering spelling assessments such as Donald Bear's Spelling Inventory in *Words Their Way*, you can determine which instruction will be needed to support students in reaching end-of-year expectations: writing a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes), and spelling simple words phonetically by drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships (CCSS L.K.2d).

You'll want to make sure that the information you get from assessments such as the Letter ID and spelling inventories aligns with what you see in students' writing. Remember that if they are able to recognize letters in isolation or write them during a spelling inventory, you'll want to make sure they are applying this knowledge when writing. If they aren't yet applying the knowledge they demonstrate during spelling inventories to their writing, you'll want to begin your word study instruction with the features they are still learning to use in context. During September and October you'll probably find that your students need support with alphabet knowledge, letter-sound correspondence, early print concepts, phonological awareness, and basic sight words.

*Early Print Concepts*

In your word study, shared reading, and interactive writing you are probably teaching early print concepts—directionality, print vs. pictures (including representational drawings), words vs. letters, and spaces between words. You may be using activities such as Star Name, studying a

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**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

15

few children's names each week and doing short activities around their names that support not only early print concepts but also alphabet knowledge (letter names, uppercase vs. lowercase letter). To help students transfer their knowledge of print concepts to their own writing, think about using the same language you use during word study during writing workshop. Begin minilessons that support word work by making connections to other times of day when this work has been done, and explicitly show students how to use these print concepts. You could, for instance, draw a picture that represents what children are writing about and then label it to demonstrate how writers use pictures and words to teach or tell a story. Of course, students who have not yet developed strong alphabet knowledge may draw squiggles, numbers, or letter-like symbols to represent their ideas, but the important thing will be that they learn that their pictures send a message (and need to be drawn in a way readers understand) and are accompanied by print that they 'read' to tell about their picture.

*Alphabet Knowledge and Letter-Sound Correspondence*

Your word study will also consist of time spent teaching letter names, letter formation, and letter-sound correspondence. You are probably using an alphabet chart and name charts, and are creating activities in shared reading and interactive writing to focus on these skills, such as searching for letters, labeling pictures, and using alphabet charts and students' names as tools for determining letters used when labeling and forming uppercase and lowercase letters (CCSS L.K.1a). When you are demonstrating how to use letter knowledge during a RWP writing workshop, you'll want to show children how you use tools such as the alphabet chart and name chart to make decisions about which letters to use in your writing and how to form them. Know that at this point in the year students may still be writing symbols that don't yet look like actual letters, or they may be writing random strings of letters. As they begin to learn about letters and how to form them during word study, you'll want to see them begin to write these same letters during writing time. Children may not yet write letters that correspond to sounds heard in particular words, and if they do, often they will have used their knowledge of letter names to represent sounds. For example, 'cat' might be written with a 'k' or 'chair' might be written as 'h.' Your writers also will probably write strings of letters in which one letter represents a sound heard in the word, but the string of letters will not necessarily correspond to the sequence of sounds in the word. That is because your writers are still developing their understanding of units of sound, phonological awareness work that you are also focusing on during word study.

*Phonological Awareness*

Your phonological awareness work in word study at this time of year is probably focused on the largest units of sound in spoken language—hearing words in sentences, syllables in words, and rhyming words. While the goal by the end of kindergarten is for students to isolate and segment sounds in simple words (CCSS RF.K.2d) so that they can then record one letter for each sound they hear, this is sophisticated work, and it is important that for student who are not yet able to do that, they first learn to understand and manipulate larger units of sound. As students learn to hear spoken words as units of sound, they can begin to record a letter for this sound. They might say a word and write the salient sound, which for them might be the one they recognize as a

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**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

16

sound in their own name, or a letter they've been studying during word work. Celebrate when a sound from a word is recorded and represents an entire word. Language play done through songs, games, and shared reading that emphasizes recognizing and producing rhymes develops students' phonological awareness and will help them better hear sounds which they are beginning to represent with letters.

As students develop the understanding of these larger units of sound, your word study instruction in this area will turn toward more sophisticated concepts such as isolating sounds in words. This phonemic awareness work will help them to hear and record a letter for each phoneme in words, usually beginning with initial phonemes and then moving to final phonemes. You will use prompts such as, "Say the word. Listen to the first sound. Write a letter for that sound." Even students who do not yet have letter-sound correspondence can record a letter for each sound they hear. As children learn more letters and sounds, you will know which letters to expect them to use correctly. To help students remember which letters they know and should be used correctly, you can highlight all the letters on a student's individual alphabet chart that they know. They should be able to recognize, name, and pronounce the sound of these letters.

#### *High Frequency Words*

While you are beginning to teach students about problem-solving words, it is important to include work around learning specific words in your writing instruction. You have probably been adding student names to your word wall as they are studied, and may even have small versions of a name chart in student book bags or writing folders so that students can use them if they want to write friends' names or use their own name to help them spell other words. By the end of this unit, you will begin teaching a few simple high frequency words such as 'I,' 'a,' 'to,' and 'me.' Children need to recognize when a word they want to write is one that they "just know" or is one that they can find easily on the word wall because it is one they are learning. In your conferring you may need to provide students with more support in using the word wall—showing them how to locate a word, picture it in their mind, and then try to write it from memory. This approach helps them to learn to use the word wall *and* learn the new word at the same time. You might use prompts such as "Say the word. Do you know it? Picture it. Write it fast." or "Say the word. Do you know it? Where can you find it?"

#### *Editing*

During your RWP writing units you will be teaching writers ways to edit their work to make it easy for the reader, and for themselves, to read. Ultimately, this will help them to monitor and correct visual aspects of their texts—spelling, capitalization, punctuation, spacing—work that will develop across the year. It is important that this instruction doesn't just come at the end of a bend during the publication process.

At this point in the year, editing will be focused on teaching students to reread to make sure they have words that match their picture. They may also begin to check their spelling. Of course, their words might be strings of letters or only initial consonants, but the important thing is that they

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**Writing Curricular Calendar, Kindergarten, 2012-2013**  
**Unit One - Launching the Writing Workshop**

17

learn that writers edit—they check their writing. Rereading is the first step. If you can get them to reread, notice something isn't quite right, and add a letter or make any other change, this is even better as they have begun to self-correct! Keep in mind that these beginning steps help children to develop a process for writing that they will build on as their knowledge of words and how they work grows.





## Unit Map 2012-2013

Columbia University Teachers College

Collaboration / Writing K\* / Kindergarten (Elementary School)

Friday, June 15, 2012, 1:40PM



### Unit 1: Launching the Writing Workshop (Week 1, 4 Weeks)

#### Unit Rationale

#### WORK IN PROGRESS/DRAFT. Revised as of 6-12-2012

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#### Rationale:

This first unit in kindergarten writing has several big purposes. First, it introduces students to the routines and rituals of writing workshop, setting them up to work with independence. Second, it teaches them the foundational skills in writing that they need to use this year. A third, equally important goal is that students see themselves as writers from the moment they step foot into the classroom. From day one, then, they will learn that they have important information to share and meaningful stories to tell, which they can record on paper through writing.

Because kindergarten students need to learn the basics of using symbols, including pictures and written words, to communicate their thinking and talk on paper, in this first unit they will learn how to draw pictures using shapes to make these more representational, and how to stretch words to hear sounds, matching these with letters.

By the end of kindergarten, the Common Core State Standards expect students to sequentially narrate one event (or two loosely linked events), providing a reaction to what happened; and to compose informative/explanatory texts, naming the topic and providing some information about it. This first unit begins to move students toward both genres of writing, providing the instruction and practice needed for them to meet these two standards.

Finally, this unit is specifically designed with transfer in mind; because students must apply everything they learn about writing in one genre (teaching books) to writing in a second genre (narratives), within this first unit, they learn that skills are transferable from one context to another. According to Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), in order to be successful, students need not only learn the steps of the writing process, but also use those steps in a process. This is cognitively demanding work. This unit, then, sets a solid foundation for the work that lies ahead, not only in kindergarten, but also across the grades: learning and trying out information in one context to applying it purposefully and independently across contexts.

#### Overview:

This first unit in writing accounts for the varied skills that kindergartners bring with them into the workshop. Students will draw and write as best they can—first teaching texts, then stories—while learning how to turn squiggles into representational drawings, and scribbles into letters and words. The unit cycles through the writing process many times, providing students the chance to generate ideas, rehearse for writing, draft and revise multiples pieces. Students will have practice writing in two genres with increasing

independence, volume, and skill. Across this unit, students will use the writing process of think, talk, draw and write to create pieces in two genres.

During this unit, not only do children begin to learn the writing process, they also work on foundational phonics skills. By the end of the unit, most students should grasp the principle that each sound or phoneme in a word is represented by a letter (or a letter-like mark). Because students write for an extended period of time every day, they have ample opportunity to practice stretching out words and writing down the letters for the sounds they hear. Spelling patterns and letter/word awareness are addressed through the use of interactive writing, small group work, and individual conferences, all key components to supporting writers during any given unit of study.

In order for children to carry on with independence, they will learn routines for how to move from one area to another in the classroom, find supplies, and keep themselves working, allowing the teacher to explicitly teach. They will also learn how to carry on conversations in partnerships; they will learn to listen and respond, to ask clarifying questions, offer feedback, speak about their work, and hear their partner's ideas.

In Bend One, children write 'teaching' pieces, or information writing. They learn to quickly think of a topic they know and care about, and then to put that information onto the page as best they can. Children will of course draw, and will also label their drawings, either approximating writing or writing actual letters and words (what they produce early on in the unit will depend on the skills they bring into the classroom). They will learn to draw representationally so that their scribbles take on meaning, as well as to hear sounds in words and to identify and record the letters they hear. Meanwhile, they will learn to revise as they write, to ask themselves, "Have I done everything I can do in this one piece? Are there enough pictures? Enough words? Have I told everything I know and can share about this topic?" before they declare a piece done.

The second bend lifts the level of the work children did during Bend One. Whereas earlier, children wrote teaching "pieces," now they will write teaching "books." To that children will turn teaching pieces into teaching books with multiple pages (three to five). This bend is all about adding on, writing more, revising to make writing even fuller. Kids who made squiggles will now make letters kids who made letters will now make words, and kids who wrote single words will now write two-word labels, or even simple sentences.

For the first two bends in the road of this unit, some children may write two, three or even four pieces of writing in one day's writing workshop. Many kids will breeze through multiple pieces of writing, and will learn to put finished work in one side of their folder, and ongoing work in the other, how to choose new paper for themselves, and how to get started on a new piece of "writing."

Bend Three mirrors much of the work in the first two bends of the unit. The only difference is that now children will write stories, not teaching texts. They will learn to tell about a sequenced event in which something happens to them, to plan it across pages and to capture it on paper. They will meanwhile learn the important fact that writers create different kinds of writing, and will simultaneously benefit from the repeated practice of using the writing process to put thinking on the page. They can use both pictures and "words" to write, can check to be sure they've gotten everything onto the page that they wanted to say, and can ask each other questions to clarify.

Finally, in Bend Four, children will pick their best piece to fix and fancy up for their first author celebration. They will check to be sure that their words look right, editing for spelling and even word choice or sentence structure (depending on their abilities at this point in the year.)

## Big Idea/Enduring Understanding

1. Even very young kids can be authors, using words and pictures to put their stories onto the paper, and can begin to learn how to turn their thinking into symbols, including representational pictures, letters and words.
2. Little kids can write all by themselves—they can think up what to say and use drawings and letters to write as best they can. When they finish one piece, they can start another. They can use the writing practice and the classroom and workshop scaffolds to keep themselves going, becoming independent writers, problem-solvers, and members of the workshop.
3. Every writer should be able to come up with a topic or a story about which to write, and should understand the difference between and the steps involved in creating teaching texts and those involved in writing narrative texts.
4. Every writer should be able to decide when a piece is "done" and when it needs more information or detail. Writers know to write enough to convey all they know about a topic, or to tell sequentially and in detail all that happened in a true life story, revising and editing as need be.

### Essential Questions for Learners

- When I want to teach people what I know and care about, what are the steps I follow to get that thinking down on the page? How can I use everything I know about drawing and about letters and sounds?
- If I want to tell true stories from my life, how can I use all that I know about writing teaching books to help me? How can I make sure I tell what happened in order and fill in any missing parts?

### Guiding Questions for Teachers

- How can I create a writing workshop environment that supports students at a range of ability levels—one that sets them up to work with engagement and independence? How can I help students identify topics they know and care about and then put these onto the page as best they can through a combination of drawings and (approximated) writing?
- How can I teach writers to turn teaching "pieces" into teaching "books," writing with greater volume and detail, transferring what they learn from phonics and phonemic awareness into their independent writing, using symbols to turn thinking and talking into words and squiggles into representational drawings?
- How can I teach young writers to carry all they already know about writing teaching books to writing and revising real life, sequential stories, adding details to pictures, asking, "What happens next?" and filling in missing parts of the story?
- How can I teach children to revise their best pieces, paying particular attention to making sure that words look and sound right?

### Key Areas of Focus in the CCSS

**CCSS: ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects K-5, CCSS:**

### **Kindergarten, Writing**

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- W.K.2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- W.K.3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

- W.K.5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

### **Additional Standards Particular to Your State**




#### **Common Core Learning Standards**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.K.5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

<b>Cross Curricular to Cross Grade Level Skills</b>	<b>Rubrics/Continua</b>
<p>Children will enter kindergarten with a wide range of pre-school experiences in literacy. Some children will have been read to and read with for extraordinary amounts of time. Other children will have almost no experience reading. This same idea holds true for writing and talking. There will be a wide range of experience in conversation and putting symbols down on paper. This unit involves a great deal of close kid-watching and matching of minilessons to the strengths and needs of these writers.</p> <p><b>Parallel expectations in the Content Areas require students to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ work on getting to know themselves and others</li></ul>	<p>The Narrative Writing Continuum or the Information Writing Continuum will help you determine a starting level for each child. This will also help you determine what to teach in terms of structure, elaboration, craft, cohesion, and meaning as well as guide you to the types of paper you start off with to support your students' writing. You will later want to compare what your kids produce for this initial assessment with what they are able to do at the end of the unit and throughout the year.</p> <p>The Writing Process Continuum will aid in assessing children's understanding and use of the different stages of the writing process.</p>

- learn how to be a partner who both tells other children who they are and who gets to know others
- write information texts about things they know a lot about and true stories from their lives

 Narrative Writing Continuum  
 Informational Writing Continuum  
 Writing Process Continuum

These information texts and true stories are perfect ways to do some of the work in the Content Areas.

### **Academic Technical Vocabulary**

Teaching books

Drawing

Labeling

Turn and Talk

True Stories

Write

Revise

Edit

### **Spelling and Print Concepts**

#### **Alphabet and Letter-Sound Correspondence**

- Letter names
- Letter formation
- Letter-sound correspondence

#### **Phonological Awareness**

Phonological awareness work and work in word study at this time of year is probably focused on the larger units of sounds in spoken language, such as:

- Hearing the words in sentences
- Syllables in words
- Rhyming words

#### **High Frequency Words:**

At this point of the year students will often be using:

- Student names in their writing as they have been studying names in the classroom and have references, such as, the word wall and student name charts.

- Also, based on the high frequency word assessments and your students' writing you may be teaching 2-3 specific high frequency words a week.

### Editing

At this point of the year we may be instructing students to:

- Reread their writing and check that the picture matches the words
- They may also be checking their spelling (which might be strings of letters or only consonants)

<b>Sequenced Learning Plans/Minilessons</b>	<b><u>Assessments</u></b> <b>Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels</b>
<p>Below is a series of teaching points that could be used during whole class minilessons, mid-workshop teaching points, teaching shares and could also support small group instruction. Teachers will alter this list, especially by adding to it, in order to respond to students' needs.</p> <p><b>Guiding Questions / Bend One:</b></p> <p>How can I create a writing workshop environment that supports students at a range of ability levels—one that sets them up to work with engagement and independence? How can I help students identify topics they know and care about and then put these onto the page as best they can through a combination of drawings and (approximated) writing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Today I want to teach you that every one of us in this classroom can be an author, and we can write books like the ones that surround us in our meeting area. In order to a teaching book, writers think of something that we care about or know about, we get a picture in our mind, and we write it on our paper. Then, we write the words that go along with the pictures! That is—we think, we draw, we write. (See Session I, "Starting the Writing Workshop," in <i>Launching the Writing Workshop</i>)</li> <li>▪ Today I want to teach you that writers have a saying, "When you're done, you've just begun." When we finish one piece of writing, we get to work. Sometimes we add to the picture or to the words—and sometimes we get a new piece of paper and start a new piece. Our job, as writers, is to keep working on our writing for the whole writing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Formative: DOK 1 Recall: Teacher Observation</b></p> <p>Observe and take notes on students' behaviors as they read, talk and write. This will help monitor the way students approach their work, and provide data to develop ways to help them through the writing process.</p> <p><b>Formative: DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: On-Demand Narrative Writing Initial Assessment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This unit will begin with an on-demand writing assessment. Students will be given a chance to show off all that they know about narrative writing. The prompt might begin, "I'm really eager to understand what you can do as writers, so before you do anything else, please spend today writing the very best personal narrative, the best small-moment story, of one particular time in your life. You'll have 45 minutes to write this true story of one small moment. Write in a way that shows me all that you know about how to do this kind of writing."</li> <li>2. Children will not be coached during this assessment and will not be reminded of strategies or techniques. The assessment will be completely hands-off, so as to see what children are able to do independently.</li> <li>3. After children have completed their work, the pieces will be collected and assessed against the Narrative Writing Continuum. The specific teaching of the unit will be adapted to align to the needs of the class as a whole. Individual and small group teaching will also be informed by this data-in-hand.</li> </ol>



workshop. (See Session II, "Carrying on Independently as Writers," in *Launching the Writing Workshop*.)

- Today I want to teach you that writers, like carpenters and doctors, have special tools and special places to keep our tools. And, we always know where to find our tools so that when we get a good idea for a story, we don't have to waste time looking for a pen or paper or our writing folder—we know where everything is so that we can grab our paper and start to write. (See Session III, "Using Supplies Independently," in *Launching the Writing Workshop*.)

#### **Guiding Questions / Bend Two:**

How can I teach writers to turn teaching "pieces" into teaching "books," writing with greater volume and detail, transferring what they learn from phonics and phonemic awareness into their independent writing, using symbols to turn thinking and talking into words and squiggles into representational drawings?

- Today I want to teach you that writers use both pictures and words when we write. Some writers write words on labels beside the picture, and some write words in sentences at the bottom of the page. But every writer writes with pictures and words. (See Session VI, "Using Both Pictures and Words, Like Famous Authors," in *Launching the Writing Workshop*.)
- Today I want to teach you that writers don't only stretch out our words to hear the sounds, we also stretch our writing out, writing across a bunch of pages." (See Session XII, "Introduction Booklets," in *Launching the Writing Workshop*.)

#### **Guiding Questions / Bend Three:**

How can I teach young writers to carry all they already know about writing teaching books to writing and revising real life, sequential stories, adding details to pictures, asking, "What happens next?" and filling in missing parts of the story?

- Today I want to teach you that when writers want to tell stories, we picture something that

#### **Formative: DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: Writing Conference Formative Assessment**

In a writing conference, the teacher observes and/or interviews, researching especially to understand what the writer can do, can almost do, and cannot yet do, and to understand the new work that a writer is attempting to do, and the challenges the writer is confronting.

1. The teacher approaches a conference, already recalling what he or she knows about the student as a writer. The teacher may look back on notes from previous conferences, small group work, and assessments, and/or may watch for a bit to notice patterns in what the writer is already engaged in doing.
2. The teacher may begin by saying to the writer what he or she has already noticed, asking the writer to say more about that or the teacher may begin by recalling the last conversation held with the writer. Or, the teacher may begin simply by asking the writer about his or her work as a writer.
3. The writer talks. The teacher uses gestures, follow-up questions, and active-listening to coax the writer to say more, to elaborate, and to provide examples.
4. The teacher develops a tentative theory about the student as a writer and about the new work the student is doing and could be doing. Based on this, the teacher decides what he or she could compliment and could teach the writer.
5. The teacher compliments the writer, making sure to name what the writer is doing well in such a way that the writer transfers that to other days, other writing pieces.
6. The teacher then sets the writer up to work towards a new goal. The teacher makes the goal as concrete, specific, and alluring as possible, showing the writer the specific strategies he or she could use in order to make progress towards this new goal. The writer may get started working towards the new goal, with the teacher coaching into this work. The teacher assures the writer of future follow-up work.

we did, remembering what happened first and next, and then we draw and write the story on the paper. As we do that, we often think of more stuff to add (*Launching the Writing Workshop*, p. 27).

- Today I want to teach you that when authors have more to say, we get another sheet of paper and draw and write what happened next. Authors reread and add another sheet so we can tell what we did next.
- Today I want to teach you that one way writers bring our stories to life is by making their characters talk. Specifically, writers write bits of talking in speech bubbles by the heads of whoever is talking.

#### **Guiding Questions / Bend Four:**

How can I teach children to revise their best pieces, paying particular attention to making sure that words look and sound right?

- Today I want to teach you that writers fix up and fancy up our writing before we publish it. We fix it up by rereading it, and thinking "Does this make sense?" Then we change the confusing parts (*Launching the Writing Workshop*, p. 103).
- Today I want to teach you that writers fix up our writing by making sure other people can read it. To do that, we reread our writing with our finger, and we check to make sure that our words look right (*Launching the Writing Workshop*, p. 109).

Today, I want to teach you that writers celebrate their hard work and writing by sharing with others. One way we can celebrate is by "Reading into the Circle". We chose a part of our piece and then read that one part to the class. When we're finished, we turn our head to the next person so she knows it's her turn until we get all the way around the circle. After we've all had a chance to celebrate, we will get into little groups and read our pieces to our group (*Launching the Writing Workshop*, p. 115).

#### **Formative: DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: Final Drafts, Drafting Packets, & Reflections Final Assessment**

At the end of this unit, students will turn in their final drafts of personal narratives, plus the drafting packet that includes their initial drafts and revisions. Students will also be asked to write a reflection, answering these or similar questions:

1. What was the most successful strategy that I tried during this unit of study? What made this strategy work for me? How did it help my writing?
2. In what ways is my final draft a more powerful personal narrative/memoir than my first draft? What did I do as a writer to improve my storytelling and my use of conventions during revision and editing?
3. What do I still have to work on as a narrative writer? What parts of narrative writing are still tricky for me?
4. In my next piece of narrative writing, what will I try that will push me to write an even better story than I've written this time?

These questions will require students to analyze their own work across the unit, to evaluate where they have made progress and where they have yet to improve. It will also offer a window into how they have internalized the teaching: what they understand about narrative writing and what makes it powerful.

The final drafts themselves, along with the drafting packets, will offer a final opportunity to take stock of students' narrative writing abilities, using the Narrative Continuum once again, and to assess their use of the writing process, noting how they took advantage of instruction and class and home time to improve their stories from their inception in the writing notebook until their publication as final drafts.

#### **Formative: DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: On-Demand Information Writing**

Let students know the day before this assessment that the next day you will want to see what they already know how to do in informational writing, and

they will have 45 minutes to write the best piece in this genre that they can write.

Prompt: "Think of a topic that you've studied or know. Tomorrow, you will have 45 minutes to write an informational (or all-about) text that teaches others interesting and important information and ideas about that topic. If you want to find and use information from a book or another outside source, you may bring that with you tomorrow. Please keep in mind that you'll have 45 minutes to complete this. You will only have this one period, so you'll need to plan, draft, revise and edit in one sitting. Write in a way that shows me all that you know about informational writing."

Refrain from reminding writers of everything you hope they remember about this genre, or from otherwise coaching them towards success. This is a formative assessment and you want it to be an accurate window into what students can do independently.






After writers have completed their work, collect the writing. Then hold each piece alongside the informational writing continuum. Please click the link in the Rubrics/Continua section above for access to this tool. Notice especially the examples of student work and where one student's writing fits on this continuum of student examples. No piece will precisely fit a particular level, and it is fine if there are some gaps.

Once you have identified one student's level, continue to do this with all your students, moving quickly. Then look at what the continuum suggests most students need to learn soon, and consider combining that instruction into the upcoming narrative writing unit. Consider using a text that is a level or two beyond the students' average level as a mentor text.

### **Letter/Sound Identification**

The Letter ID Assessment will provide valuable information about which kids know their letters and sounds, and which do not.

Please see the attached Letter ID documents.

-  [Performance Assessment](#)
-  [Letter Sound Identification Directions](#)
-  [Letter Sound Identification Implications](#)
-  [Letter Sound Identification Recording Form](#)
-  [Letter Sound Identification Student Copy](#)

## **Resources**

### **Texts Used(fiction, non-fiction, on-line, media, etc...)**

- Curricular Plan: "Launching the Writing Workshop" (Heinemann 2011)
- Narrative Writing Continuum
- Informational Writing Continuum

### **Materials Used**

- 1 page paper with a large box and one line (adapt paper to more lines according to observations)
- Writing Center: writing pens, stapler, date stamp, differentiated paper baskets
- Writing folders (pictures – send home lists of things they can send pictures of)
- Word wall with names
- Possible charts (anchor chart, things to write about)
- Possible read alouds
  - *The Kissing Hand, Bunny Cakes, The Carrot Seed, Caps for Sale, Shortcut, Big Mama's, The Snowy Day*

### **Professional texts**

- This unit relies heavily on the forthcoming books (Heinemann 2013). Please see the book aligned to this unit from *Units of Study for Teaching Writing, Grade by Grade: A Yearlong Workshop Curriculum, Grade K*
- Calkins, Lucy and Mermelstein, Leah. 2003. *Units of Study for Teaching Writing: Launching the Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Matteson, David M. and Freeman, Deborah K. 2005. *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Writers: Every Picture Tells a Story*. New York: Richard C. Owen Publishers.
- McCarrier, Andrea, Pinnell, Gay Su and Fountas, Irene C. 2000. *Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together, K-2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- McGee, Lea M. and Morrow, Lesley M. 2005. *Teaching Literacy in Kindergarten*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Ray, Katie and Cleaveland, L. 2004. *Writing Workshop with our Youngest Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

### **Instructional Support for Differentiation**

- ELL      ELL

- **Special Education** Teachers should monitor ELLs throughout the writing experience. ELLs will benefit from goal setting activities that give them clear, specific, reachable goals for their writing. These activities provide students with pathways for accomplishing their goals and ensuring that they clearly understand the expectations. Teachers can support ELLs by providing genre-specific rubrics that help them focus on content and the particular area in which they are currently developing language and literacy. Students should be honored in their native language. They should also be exposed to picture support to help them write a story.

Special Education Modifications should be based on students' IEPs.

### **Alternative Maps for this Unit**

Alternate maps are always welcome. If you have an alternate map you would like to share, please send it to [contact@readingandwritingproject.com](mailto:contact@readingandwritingproject.com) and we will post it with your name and school.

### **Connections to Teacher Effectiveness**

At the beginning of the year, you will want to focus on the classroom environment domain. You may consider:

- How you set up your classroom
- How you organize your classroom writing center
- How you make your charts to meet the needs of all the students (e.g. tactile, visual, and kinesthetic-charts should reflect your specific students' needs)
- How you make your meeting area a purposeful place and establish routines and rituals of coming to the meeting area
- How you begin work on day one

Another domain is instruction. You may consider:

- How you use assessment to inform your instruction. Ensure it is based on the curriculum and the needs of your students
- How you establish goals that are attainable and measurable and are visible in your instruction

In order to demonstrate flexibility and respond to students' needs in a timely and data-based way:

- Use a template for collecting consistent data that can be looked across easily. Collect initial, formative and summative data throughout each unit and use it to adapt teaching plans on a regular basis.
- Create a series of predictable next steps based on the sequenced learning plans above, the *Narrative Writing Continuum*, the *Information Writing Continuum* and student data.
- Use conference notes to ensure that individual and small group teaching is aligned with past instruction and research. Be sure that students are also aligning their practice to past learning. Assess conference notes to be sure they show teacher and student accountability (evidence,

feedback, and so on).

- Look at student artifacts to assess how students are processing and understanding what is taught, and to ensure they are growing in their use of a skill, strategy and/or behavior.

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